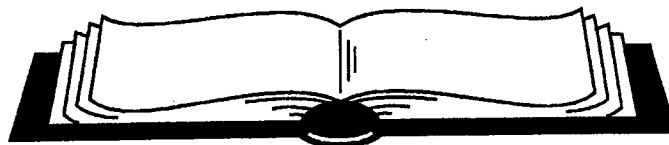


NEW JERSEY

1999-2000

Guidelines and
Application

BEST

PRACTICES ORIGINAL

Deadline for Application to County Office:
NOVEMBER 22, 1999

Category	Language Arts Literacy	(Application is limited to one category. See page 3 for details.)
Practice Name	In A Kaleidoscope	
Number of Schools with Practice	1	(If more than one school or district, read and complete information on page 2.)

County	Somerset	
District (Proper Name)	Hillsborough Township Public Schools	School District
District Address	555 Amwell Road	
	street/p. o. box	08853
	Neshanic	
	city	zip code
District Telephone	(908) 369-0030	Fax (908) 369-8286 Email
Chief School Administrator	Dr. Robert Gulick	
Nominated School #1 (Proper Name)	Hillsborough Middle School	
School Address	260 Triangle Road	
	street/p. o. box	08876
	Somerville	
	city	zip code
School Telephone	(908) 874-3420	Fax (908) 874-3492 Email
School Principal	Robert DelPrete	
Program Developer(s)	Janice Forte/Jane Eilbacher	
Chief School Administrator's or Charter School Lead Person's Signature	Robert Gulick	

FOR USE BY COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS ONLY	
Approved: <u>Yes</u> ___ No	County Superintendent's Signature <u>David Shimpf</u>

NEW JERSEY
BEST PRACTICES
1999-2000 APPLICATION

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Application Requirements:

- ◆ **RESPONSES to the information and the statements below must be ANONYMOUS.** No reference should be made to the names of the district or the school(s). Use the words "the school" or "the schools" in referring to the applicant in responding to the statements.
- ◆ **USE ONLY THE SPACE PROVIDED ON THE APPLICATION FORM on pages 1, 2 (if applicable) and 4 and THE NUMBER OF LINES SPECIFIED FOR RESPONSES to the statements.** Do not include any additional materials, as they will not be reviewed in the selection process.
- ◆ Application must be keyboarded on 8 1/2" x 11" white paper, portrait format. Ten-point or larger computer font or twelve-pitch or larger typewriter font must be used. (This sentence is in ten-point.)
- ◆ **KEYBOARDED RESPONSES** to the statements below must be **no more than a total of three pages.** Keyboard the statement followed by the response. Format your response to the number of lines specified.
- ◆ The information on page 4 and the keyboarded responses to statements must be printed or copied on one side of the page. The information on pages 1 and 2 (if applicable) must be printed or copied on one side of the page. Staple pages 1 and 2 (if applicable) and 4 and the keyboarded responses together.
- ◆ The original application must be signed by the district chief school administrator or charter school lead person, indicating his/her approval.
- ◆ The original and seven copies of the application must be submitted to the county superintendent of schools by November 22, 1999, with the Itemized List of District Applications form. Keep the seven copies of each application together with the original containing the signature of the district chief school administrator or charter school lead person on the top of each set.
- ◆ **FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE PROCEDURES FOR SUBMISSION OF THE APPLICATION MAY RESULT IN THE ELIMINATION OF THE APPLICATION.**

The following data is required to assist the panelists in the evaluation of the application:		
Type of School	Grade Levels	Practice Name
___ Elementary School	___	___ In A Kaleidoscope
<u>X</u> Middle School	<u>8</u>	___
___ Junior High School	___	Number of Schools with Practice <u>1</u>
___ High School	___	Number of Districts with Practice <u> </u>
___ Other: <u> </u>	___	___

Check the ONE CATEGORY into which the practice best fits.		
___ Arts (Visual and Performing Arts) ___ Assessment/Evaluation ___ Bilingual Education and Diversity ___ Citizenship/Character Education ___ Early Childhood Education Programs ___ Educational Support/Guidance ___ and Counseling Programs (services contributing to high student achievement)	___ Educational Technology ___ Health and Physical Education <u>✓</u> Language Arts Literacy ___ Mathematics ___ Professional Development ___ Public Engagement (family involvement and partnerships with business, community and/or higher education)	___ Safe Learning Environment ___ School-to-Careers/Workplace Readiness ___ Science ___ Social Studies ___ Special Education ___ World Languages

1. Describe the practice proposed for recognition, and list its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative, how it promotes high student achievement and how it can be replicated. **(Maximum of 50 lines for response)**
2. Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses and how they were identified. List the *Core Curriculum* including the *Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards** addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addresses the standard(s). **(Maximum of 50 lines for response)**
3. Document the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the objectives of the practice have been met. **(Maximum of 60 lines for response)**

*The 1996 edition of the *Core Curriculum Content Standards* published by the New Jersey State Department of Education was disseminated to all districts and charter schools and is available on line through the department's website at <http://www.state.nj.us/education>.
6appp.20

1. In A Kaleidoscope has identifiable objectives, is innovative, promotes high student achievement, and can be replicated.

Traditional short story units begin with the words first (a left brain activity), and, if there is time, the student illustrates. In contrast, In A Kaleidoscope is a visual arts based writing program, which maximizes the right brain's role in a short story writing unit. It is an innovative program in that the pictures that the students create dictate the story! Yet, these pictures are not created in the traditional "drawing" method. They are the culmination of a variety of art activities.

It must be emphasized that typical drawings are not done! At "Imagination Stations," each student experiments with painting techniques, creating colored textured papers. These techniques, to name just a few of the dozen used, include marbling, splatter, bubble, balloon impression, and kaleido-dot. These are spontaneous art projects that get the student in tune with the process rather than just the end product. It defies any preconceived ideas of what will eventually be created. Consequently, any student can accomplish exceptional, colorful, textured papers. Since the painting activities require the teacher to possess a spirit of adventure and an artistic soul rather than any specific art education courses, the experience is an easy one to replicate at any grade level not just our eighth grade level.

The creation of the textured papers is then followed by exercises in looking for images/pictures/feeling. Models for illustration include many award winners such as Dr. Seuss, Eric Carle, Leo Lionni, Ezra Jack Keats, and Ed Young. From these masters is gleaned experience with the best techniques used in children's books. Next, students receive instructional lessons on "how to look," similar to the cloud shape games played as a young child. Thus looking at the images found in their paper creations, the student can "see" concrete subjects, which he/she can now richly describe. Using these papers, the student finds images, brainstorms ideas, and begins to develop a story using oral story telling techniques. This process is shared at home; the family becomes involved in story development ideas. This process is repeated within cooperative groups. Simultaneously, the student draws, outlines, cuts, tears, and pasted the images to create illustrations. The oral story telling is now elaborated by rich description, and a written book begins to take form. Like a kaleidoscope, the words and pictures are always changing, creating new wonders at every turn.

There is also a technology component to the creative process. Assuredly, students use word processing to actually print the story. However, the scanner program is used too—and not just for replication. Scanned pictures can be enhanced artistically with line drawings and color shadings. Thus, technology serves as another artistic tool.

The objectives for this unit are as multi-faceted as a kaleidoscope. There are short story writing objectives. For example, the story that results must be one that a parent/adult would read aloud to a child. Additionally, it must contain all the elements of good plot and conflict writing as well as similes, metaphors, personification, and imagery. There must also be an easily identifiable theme/controlling purpose that teaches/reinforces an invaluable lesson. Furthermore, the fine points of putting together a book from cover to cover constitute other objectives. Physically, the book must contain all elements of being "publishing ready." Skills involve all aspects of book making from creating an appropriate cover, for example, to the finishing touch of a back cover. This finished product also includes the expository writing component of a dedication and an "about the author." Moreover, there are objectives that encompass the art experience. These range from participation in all the "Imagination Stations" to showing evidence of using a variety of collage techniques as demonstrated by an assortment of children's books used as models.

It is easy to see how In A Kaleidoscope promotes a high achievement level within every aspect of the program. Because of its dynamics, students immediately take great pride in their work even before the many evaluation checkpoints are completed. As a matter of fact, the responsibility flow changes from the "usual" teacher-directed to that of student ownership. The project becomes self-motivated rather than teacher imposed!

In A Kaleidoscope is the most creative and imaginative short story writing unit that one could implement. Its uniqueness allows all students to be challenged and successful at the same time. The student who initially has felt that he/she is "not an artist or a book writer" walks away from this program with a wonderful book, evidence that he/she has become both an illustrator and an author.

2. In A Kaleidoscope addresses student educational needs and the Core Curriculum Content Standards including the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards.

In A Kaleidoscope is a cross-curricular, alternative writing program. It embraces all Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards as well as most of the Core Curriculum Standards. All this information has been documented in detail. However, just some of the more interesting points will be highlighted here.

The Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards are reflected in the process since students must demonstrate a positive work ethic and meet deadlines. They must be cooperative in their groups, working together to successfully complete their individual books. They need self-management skills whether working in the technology phase of the book production or during the critical thinking/decision-making phase when establishing the story's theme.

All six of the Visual and Performing Arts Standards are met. The illustrations require that "all students will utilize arts elements and arts media to produce artistic products." Since the students elicit reactions from their classmates while the books are in production, "all students will demonstrate knowledge of the process of critique." In A Kaleidoscope makes it imperative that the students "use their senses, imagination, and memory to express ideas and feelings in ...visual arts." Indeed, the final book is a visual art form. Students actually consider the writing room to be an art room instead!

Some Health and Physical Education Standards are also met. Since the theme of the stories must be a valuable lesson, it is evident that the students "learn health-enhancing personal, interpersonal, and life skills." As a matter of fact, most books "analyze the causes of conflict . . . and describe nonviolent strategies for individuals and groups to prevent and resolve conflict." Many of these conflicts involve the "impact of crisis, stress, rejection, separation, and loss, and develop coping strategies for each." Students really become committed to the theme of their stories. Often they create characters that reflect themselves working out their own emotional traumas and tribulations. Thus, although the story is to teach others a lesson, the book invariably becomes a catharsis of sorts for the adolescent author.

There are a few Mathematics Standards that have been addressed. Some wonderful counting books have been created, thus a development of "number sense and an ability to represent numbers in a variety of forms and use numbers in diverse situations." Actually, tessellations have been appearing quite regularly as a design element for inside covers, demonstrating the students' understanding of patterns.

Science Standards have also been noted. In an art mode, "students will develop problem-solving, decision-making and inquiry skills." Frankly, at the "Imagination Stations" students are required to conduct "systematic observations" so they can best utilize the paper making techniques. In addition, when creating the illustrations, the students must be aware of the light sources and "show how light is reflected, refracted, or absorbed when it interacts with matter and how colors appear as a result of this interaction." As a matter of fact, unless the story is quite obviously a fantasy, scientific accuracy is required.

Some Standards for Social Studies can be observed in the program. Most notably, students demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of the various cultures in the global community. Since they read many different children's stories from a plethora of countries, students "acquire historical understanding of varying cultures throughout the history of New Jersey, the United States, and the world." It seems that most stories demonstrate the similarities between peoples and their cultures, showing differences as an enhancement to experience and life.

As would be expected, all Language Arts Literacy Standards are met. Obviously, all students "will write in clear, concise, organized language that varies in content and form for different audiences and purposes." Students present their initial story ideas by speaking in front of the class. They all must also be active listeners, for they are to glean constructive suggestions from their classmates. The students also "view, understand, and use nontextual visual information" whether watching a film about one of the Caldecott Award winners or looking for ideas found in the pictures that were created. Most importantly, the students recognize that "written communication can affect the behavior of others." There is nothing as rewarding as watching the elementary school students' reactions when being read to. They are so totally absorbed by my students' work. Their unsolicited comments about their feelings as they relate to the characters are exactly what my students hope for. The applause at the end of the story appears to be the final reward, showing that minds can be taught and souls can be touched by a well-written word.

3. In A Kaleidoscope has documented assessment measures for meeting its objectives.

Utilizing criteria-referenced check sheets, the objectives of In A Kaleidoscope are easily assessed in a variety of ways. Obviously, not all assessments need to result in a grade. Thus, there are some components, which do not receive one. However, since this is a writing unit, there are some elements that do result in a writing grade.

Students are observed when creating their textured papers. Thus, evidence of using the various painting techniques is easily determined and recorded. Teacher – observation is also utilized when students are working in cooperative groups brainstorming and completing the oral story telling phase. These behaviors are documented as part of the process.

Each step of the drafting process is easily assessed and scored as part of the student's writing grade. Just as with every writing assignment, this ranges from completing prewrite activity sheets to the actual written story. Because we have worked with an eighth grade group, the writing expectations are rather industrious. Students are to include a specific number of similes and metaphors. Also established is that imagery, vivid verbs, and specific nouns must be used to reflect the colors and designs found in the illustrations. Dialogue must also be utilized when it is appropriate to story development. The mechanics of writing are also evaluated. Consequently, the writing component uses a criteria sheet for grading that is similar to those found in most middle school English classes. The one difference is that points are included to assess revision. No draft will be accepted in book form if there are any errors. Perfection in this project is an expectation, one that students meet each year!

The actual steps in creating the book are also documented as each is completed; thus, an authentic assessment approach is utilized. A checklist of requirements and options is provided to each student at the beginning of the process. The student initially completes the form as a means to ensure all aspects are finished to In A Kaleidoscope expectations. Through conferencing, the teacher then interacts with the student and completes a final critique. No grade is assessed. The critique allows the student to correct any errors that were made. It is a requirement that the actual book be as perfect as the story draft.

Actually, from beginning to end, the majority of the students come to class eager to have peer input. This results in a constant assessment of their work and contributes to continual revisions. The intensity of student involvement is such that the classroom becomes a kaleidoscope—ever-changing ideas reflected by colorful language. This innovative program is clearly like no other writing environment.

A further assessment of the program's success can be found developing in other areas in our middle school. Students are creating actual kaleidoscopes in the technology/shop classes. The art teachers have employed kaleidoscope design for a poster project. A math teacher has not only included tessellations in a colorful medium, but has expanded this to having her students create tee shirt designs! Thus, any program that unites curriculums can be assessed as successful.

Lastly, students reflect on this experience and draft a critique. Most sentiments are similar to one young lady's: "When my mother saw the finished book, she nearly cried. I have never been more proud."